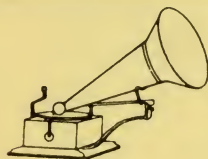


# Hillandale



Journal of the  
City of London  
Phonograph and  
Gramophone Society

THE HILLANDALE NEWS

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Yes, another tourist-souvenir gramophone model, but with a difference: this one is made entirely of silver wire, says John Stannard, who saw it in a jeweller's shop in Malta. The base is about  $2\frac{1}{2}$  inches square, and it costs the equivalent of about £280. Anyone fancy trading in a Monarch? asks John, and, indeed, it does seem a shame that a model made in precious metal and costing that sort of money could not have been a slightly more accurate representation!

# Edchat

It must be a long time since the October issue of the magazine appeared in time for the Annual General Meeting which is normally in that month, and it is normal therefore to distribute notices of the meeting with the August issue. This year, there is no chance of the October issue preceding the AGM, because the AGM is in September - on the 29th, to be precise. It is to be held at the Finbow collection of mechanical music at Cotton, near Stowmarket in Suffolk. Attendance at last year's meeting, in Cambridge, was disappointing, although it certainly was a particularly depressing day as far as the weather went, and parking a car in Cambridge on a Saturday proved to be about as easy as playing a cassette tape on a dog gramophone. This year, we hope to see more members attending, and the venue itself should provide a useful incentive, and for cinema enthusiasts there is a cinema organ installed, complete with hoist to bring the console and the performer into view from somewhere down under and return them thither when done with.

This might be a convenient point to remind members that the normal September meeting at the Bloomsbury Institute takes place on the 11th, and the programme is a celebration of the centenary of John McCormack's birth, presented by Peter Martland.

There has been a steady and gratifying response to my plea for articles, and indeed this issue is now full, with two good articles having to be held over for the next (no, I'm not going to tell you what they are about, wait and see!) Two articles will not fill a magazine, however, so keep 'em coming! As readers will see from correspondence in this and the previous issue, there does seem to be a demand for basic information, perhaps presented in an easily digestible form. Much of the sort of thing which those who call themselves novices want to know is in fact contained in articles in back numbers without, it may be, being easy to find. Frank Andrews' learned company histories, for example, are probably rather heavy-going for the newcomer to the subject, but they often provide very useful titbits of information on label design and company designation, for example, which are vital clues in dating their products. I doubt if there is a simple answer to the sort of question posed in one letter on the following pages - a simple guide to record dating. Apart from the fact that any electrical recording is unlikely to be pre-1925 unless it's by Guest and Merriman, and 12-inch discs came in in 1903, you really have to get to know the label styles and changes of each individual company and when they operated. All the same, someone may be able to come up with some simple basic hints, and if so, please send them in, whether they occupy a single paragraph or five whole pages.

## ERRATA

George Taylor has asked me to correct the following points in his article in June on Opera Singers in Silent Films:

The date of Bohnen's *Rosenkavalier* is 1925, not 1920.

The date of Farrar's *Carmen* is 1915, not 1913.

Addition to list: Georgette Leblanc-Maeterlinck (sop. 1860-1941), *Macbeth*, 1916.

Sam Goldwyn's experience with Farrar, not appearance.



Firstly, the Society's apologies to the presenter of this meeting for the lateness of this report, which should have appeared in February or April, but somehow went astray. The entertainment for the evening was presented by Paul Temple, who brought along his superb Edison Triumph Model B phonograph with an oak Music Master horn. We understand that Paul acquired this machine from its original owner.

The first half of the evening was spent listening to records brought along by Paul himself. The makes of record were varied, among which were wax Amberols, Indestructible, Columbia, Lambert and White. Among the items heard were Darkies' Dawn (Olly Oakley), Apache Dance (National Military Band), Nancy Lee (Peter Dawson) and a Blue Amberol of The Night before Christmas.

Two noteworthy items were Yvette Guilbert on a wax Amberol declaiming a portion of Racine's *Phedre*, and the polar explorer Ernest Shackleton talking about his expedition.

After the interval, Members were invited to try their own records on Paul's machine and it was apparent in most cases that the records had not been heard to such advantage before. Many thanks to Paul for bringing along his machine and for an evening's entertainment presented in the true traditions of our Society.

MAY 1984

Once more, Gordon Bromly, Chairman of the Recorded Vocal Art Society presented a programme for our enjoyment. Gordon is well known for his interest in and enthusiasm for opera and serious singing, and the subject he chose for the evening's entertainment was "Famous Singers on Edison and Pathe".

The programme was divided into three parts, the first of which was of the earlier type of Pathe disc, the centre-start. Among the singers heard were Titta Ruffo, Celestina Boninsegna, Hyppolyte Belhomme and Alice Verlet, all recorded in Paris around 1906-8. A rare item was the Russian Leonid Sobinoff singing an aria from The Pearl Fishers, and the well-known *La Donna e Mobile* (in Russian, of course). The section ended with two English items, one by Ben Davies and one by Evangeline Florence.

Part 2 consisted of the later type of Pathe disc, with paper labels and edge-start. Among singers heard were Ninon Vallin, Edmond Clement, Emma Calve, Tito Schipa and Claudia Muzio.

Part 3 was devoted to Edison Diamond Discs, and here we heard Claudia Muzio, Maggie Teyte, Alessandro Bonci, Frieda Hempel and, in a delightful duet to end with, Verdi's *O Terra addio*, Marie Rappold and Giovanni Zenatello. These Edison discs were made around the period 1913-1920.

The programme was interspersed with comments on the recordings, and biographical facts about the singers (a number of whom, it was noted, were born in 1873), and was presented with Gordon's usual enthusiasm. At the end of the meeting, to commemorate the anniversary of the sad death of John McKeown, we played one of his favourite McCormack records, de Curtis' "Carmela".

London Reporter

# SENGER SONGER SITWELLS

by Ted Cunningham

This is a story all about acoustic amplification. There was this singer called Senger who was engaged to play the role of Fafner the dragon in Wagner's "Siegfried". Wagner buffs will tell you that to talk of "playing" Fafner is somewhat to overstate the case, since the performer spends the entire evening hidden from view. Senger had to crouch inside a papier-mache dragon carcase, singing as best he could through a megaphone. He sang at every second performance, alternating with another basso whom we shall call Fritz. Fritz was violently jealous of Senger and was out to get him. What he did was, one night after finishing his own performance, he made off with the only available megaphone. The singer Senger arrived the next night to find the essential equipment missing. As a consequence he remained totally inaudible throughout his performance, and the following morning all the newspaper critics were unanimous in adjudging Senger a rotten singer, and Fritz a far finer Fafner.

Consumed with rage and humiliation, Senger slunk away to consider how he might recover the situation. What he did was, he invented a much superior megaphone, and took it along to the opera-house. It was a resounding success, literally. The auditorium rang as never before with sumptuous sound. The startled audience was assailed with an unexpectedly bravura interpretation of the normally subordinate Fafner role. Siegfried and Alberich, poor devils, were understandably livid at finding themselves brutally upstaged by this unaccountably stentorian dragon.

At the end of the evening Senger emerged from the papier-mache, dusty but triumphant, and confident that he was now in the big-time. And so he would have been but for one of Fate's little interventions. That night there had been a misprint in the programme. Fafner was listed as being sung, not by Senger at all, but by his villainous rival Fritz, who was promptly hailed by the critics for his electrifying performance. "Didn't we tell you this boy was good?" they enthused.

Cruelly cast down by this bitter twist of circumstance, Senger threw in the towel and emigrated to England. All he had now was his new invention, which he had prudently patented, and he set up in business making improved megaphones. Things were slow at first, few operatic dragons showing interest in the new technology. But one day a jolly Admiral heard the instrument, and bought lots of them so that the ships of His Majesty's Royal Navy (huzzah!) might sail the seven seas shouting at each other with unattenuated clarity. So Senger hit the big-time after all.

Now I am aware that among my readers there are hard-nosed cynics who, if they have bothered to read this far, will maintain that I am making all this up. Very well then, what about the first public performance of "Facade" at the Aeolian Hall on June 12th 1923? It's a bit before my time, but you will remember it; it was in all the papers, they tell me. Edith Sitwell's poetry was recited to the sound of William Walton's music and rioting in the audience. Their performers were concealed behind a painted curtain, and the verses were declaimed through a megaphone fixed to a hole in the curtain. Well now: the curtain was painted by Frank Dobson; the hole came from a wholesaler (sorry about that) and the megaphone wasn't a megaphone, it was a Sengerphone. What was so special about this Sengerphone, and in what way did it spell the doom of the traditional speaking trumpet? Sir Osbert Sitwell, prime instigator of "Facade", tells us:



"The Sengerphone triumphantly preserved the purity of the tonal quality it magnified. Its success was due in part to the material of which it was made (a fibre derived, I believe, from compressed grasses which altogether removed the metallic timbre once associated with the word megaphone) and in part to the fact that the orifice of the amplifier covered not only the mouth but also the lips and nostrils of the speaker, thereby retaining and increasing the volume of, the resonance caused by the nasal cavities....."

I must own that when I found all this in Sir Osbert's autobiography (in which the Fafner story is confined to a scholarly footnote) I myself thought it too much like an after-dinner anecdote to be easily credible. But, I reflected, wouldn't it be nice if it were all true? So I decided to check the facts as far as I could.

According to Sitwell this Senger was a singing teacher from Hampstead ("an authority on voice production"). His association with "Facade" was not limited to providing the Sengerphone, but extended to the coaching of performers, including Edith Sitwell herself, in their vocal delivery. Yet Sitwell, who gives abundant particulars of everybody connected with the production, including the man who painted the curtain, leaves Senger as a shadow figure. He casually mentions that he had sung in opera in Germany and Switzerland, and spent several seasons with the Metropolitan Opera in New York, yet never once gives us his first name, referring to him only as Senger. Shouldn't we expect him to be more forthcoming if the man were really so talented? Without exception the reference books were dumb on the subject of Sengers of any sort. The Archives Department at Covent Garden disclaimed all acquaintance with any singer of that name. I thought I had struck gold when I found that one of the four Sengers in the London telephone book is an Operatic Artist's Agent, but the proprietors vehemently denied any connection with the man I sought. In the space of two weeks I drew enough blanks to paper a medium-sized room. Could Sir Osbert have been pulling our legs? Could it be that his own baronetical leg was being subjected to traction, perhaps by Senger himself? A humble singing teacher, eager to win distinguished patronage for his invention, might be tempted to aggrandise his past just a bit, and to romanticise the circumstances in which the invention was conceived, mightn't he? Even the name began to sound suspicious: the word senger (or sânger, which sounds the same) is simply the German word for singer.

I thought of writing to all the opera-houses of Europe, but I didn't have enough stamps, so I wrote to the New York Met. In due course back came their friendly and courteous reply. Emil Senger (Emil, eh?) had appeared there during the 1886, 1887 and 1895 seasons, singing bass-baritone roles in Lohengrin, Meistersinger and Tannhauser. As a bonus, they suggested that he might have been married to the soprano, Kathy Bettaque; they weren't sure. Well I never! Kathy Bettaque sang leading Wagnerian roles at Covent Garden; they have a picture of her in their archives, playing Eva in Die Meistersinger. At New York in 1904 and 1905 she sang Brunnhilde, Ortrud, and Beethoverls Leonora. Was she Mrs. Senger? I have no idea. Can anybody tell me?

I popped round to the Patent Office. Frank Andrews wasn't there, which made me wonder if I had gone to the right place, but after much searching I was rewarded by finding Emil Senger's original patent applications for the Sengerphone. I was delighted to discover that, just as the Sengerphone itself had given clarity to Edith Sitwell's poetry, so Senger's own words made clear the feature of his invention which Sir Osbert was trying to convey back there. I quote from the specification:

"The usual mouthpieces for speaking tubes, speaking trumpets, and other devices for receiving and conducting vocal sounds are defective, in that they lose a great part

of the sound waves produced by the voice, namely those produced in the nasal cavity and the cavities connected therewith. My invention relates to a mouthpiece in which this objection is removed. For this purpose I widen the mouthpiece in such a manner that it includes and fits closely the nose, and that by following in its contour that of the lower jaw, the upper jaw, the cheeks and bridge of the nose, it closes its own cavity to the outside air. The mouthpiece can thus be kept so shut that the speaking tube or the like becomes practically a direct extension of the acoustic cavity of the vocal organs."

It may lack the rococo elegance of Sir Osbert's prose style, but it leaves no doubt what the principle was. All the same, I would have been sorry to miss Sir Osbert's statement that the Sengerphone "covered not only the mouth but also the lips..."

On the provisional specification (November 1901) Senger gives an address in Leipzig, but by the time of the complete specification (July 1902) he was living in Berlin. But what have we here? Another patent application dated September 1914 (accepted July 1915) relating to marine mines. (Marine mines? What, the exploding sort? Yes, that's right. Good Heavens!) And on this occasion he describes himself as a vocalist, and gives his address as Haverstock Hill, Hampstead. In fact, that is where he continued to live until his death in 1936.

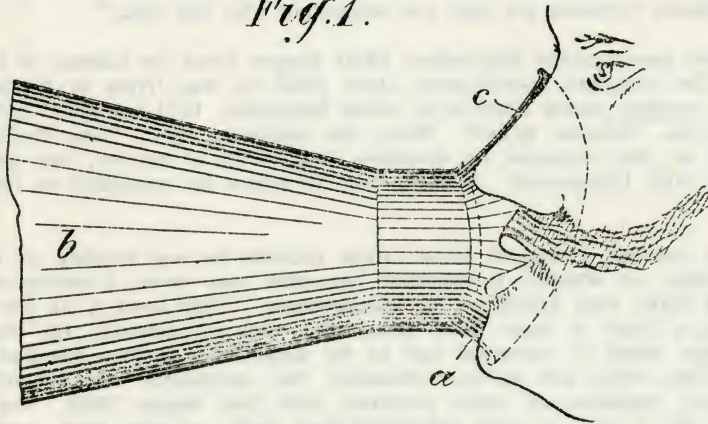
Whether Senger's interest in marine mines arose because he was already on friendly terms with the Admiralty, or whether it happened the other way about, I cannot say, but it is certain that the Navy took kindly to the Sengerphone. They used it at sea during both world wars, and a boon it must have been, too, with its capacity for clarifying diction, when an urgent word of command had to be understood without question in an emergency, amid howling winds and waves. However, the instrument was not officially adopted, that is to say, replacing all other patterns, until 2nd August 1929. The Royal Navy has kindly sent me a copy of their Admiralty Fleet Order of that date, announcing that the Sengerphone would henceforth be known as Pattern 18. According to this Fleet Order, 2nd August 1929 was quite a big day for the Royal Navy: they also officially adopted Jubilee Clips on their pneumatic hoses.

I suspect that by this time the penny will have dropped, and the reader will have realised that he knows just what the Sengerphone looks like. Of course! We have seen it fitting snugly around the faces of our favourite film actors in any movie about war at sea: "Western Approaches", "In Which We Serve", "The Cruel Sea" etc. Indeed, for several years John Mills seldom spoke at all except through his Pattern 18.

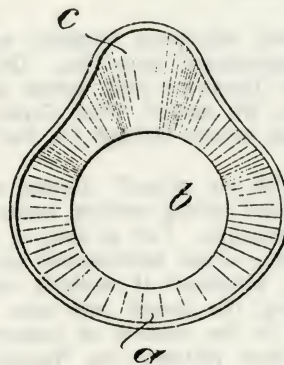
"Just a moment," I hear you cry. "Marine mines? Jubilee clips? What is all this? Why are you filling our magazine with stuff having nothing whatever to do with records, phonographs or gramophones?" Let me explain. For a start I thought you might like to know of a professional opera singer who turned professional acoustics engineer. Can't be many of those. For another start, I wondered if anybody out there knows whether the principle of the Sengerphone, enclosing the mouth and nose to improve the quality of voice transmission, was ever employed in the science of acoustic recording. One sees some evidence of it in the very early days (witness the "oxygen mask" mouthpiece of the Bell and Tainter Graphophone) but can anybody say if it was used in commercial recording studios? Once multiple horns arrived, allowing instrumental accompaniments their own independent access to the cutting stylus, could not vocal recordings have acquired added fidelity from a face-fitting horn enclosing the nose? Maybe somebody has some answers, or even some questions.



*Fig. 1.*



*Fig. 2.*



[This Drawing is a reproduction of the Original on a reduced scale.]



# POSTSCRIPT:

In the course of searching for Senger I wrote to Sir Sacheverell Sitwell, sole survivor of the famous sibling trio and much involved with Senger during the preparation of "Facade", to ask him if he could tell me anything of the man. (He couldn't - it was all too long ago.) In passing, I reminded him that his late brother's entry in "Who's Who" listed first among his recreations "Listening to the sound of my own voice, preferably on gramophone records." I said I hadn't realised that Sir Osbert had made any records: could Sir Sacheverell tell me of any? "No", came the reply; "Osbert never made any records. It was just his little joke." Ho, hum.

T.C.

## TO THE EDITOR

Dear Christopher,

While walking in the Black Forest in Germany recently, and of course humming an apposite tune, I came upon the town of St. Georgen where, to my surprise and delight, a 'Phonomuseum' has ben established. Although my German is even worse than my English, I gathered that St. Georgen was one of the main centres of gramophone production in Germany. It appears that only components were made until 1921, when the local factories started to produce complete machines.

The museum naturally concentrates on local industry (although some Edison and Columbia machines are on display) and some highly coloured horned gramophones are shown. There are also some German phonographs (e.g. a Puck and an Excelsior) and a great variety of motors, soundboxes and general components. Two unusual (to me) exhibits caught my eye. These were conventional internal horn gramophones concealed inside model Black Forest chalet houses about 2ft. by 1ft. 6in. and 1ft. 6in. high. The roof is hinged at the rear to allow access to the turntable and the whole effect is very attractive.

I was unaware of the significance of St. Georgen to the German gramophone industry and maybe some other Society members share the same ignorance. In fact, I know little about the origins of any German gramophone or phonograph company and I wonder if one of our German members could be persuaded to provide an authoritative article for the magazine?

Yours sincerely,

Mike Field.

Dear Sir,

About a year ago I acquired a copy of Zonophone No. 79, Mr. Harold Wilde singing "Thora" on one side, with "Come into the Garden Maud" on the other. A few weeks ago, another copy of Zonophone 79 came into my possession. When I checked it through to ascertain whether it was in better condition than my original, I was

struck by the loudness of the newly-acquired copy. On closer inspection I find that the labels are identical, with "Zonophone Record" around the top half, encircling "The Twin" trade-mark and with the code numbers T - 2076 and T - 2077 beneath Wilde's name on each side. However the matrix numbers and the code letters in the margin between grooves and labels are totally different. My original has matrix numbers Ah 15073 e and Ah 15074 e, which - according to Alan Kelly's chart in Hillandale of August 1983 - would indicate recording dates somewhere towards the end of the first quarter of 1912.

My newly acquired Zonophone 79, however, has matrix numbers 9149 e and 9151 e indicating - according to Kelly - the latter part of 1908. It also has raised ridges at the outside edges and around the label. It also has the coarse, moulded run-out grooves which are, surprisingly perhaps, missing from the later copy.

Although I have quite a large number of early Zonophones, my knowledge of them is rather sketchy. Perhaps someone can explain why:

- (1) my recently acquired early copy of No. 79 is a green label Zonophone and not a buff "Twin";
  - (2) why a more heavily recorded earlier edition was replaced by a later and less loud version; and
  - (3) why another version was needed. Harold Wilde wasn't apparently a top-rate singer and I would have thought it unlikely that the matrix was 'burned out'; and
  - (4) why an early edition of No 79 has a run-out groove and the later copy has not.
- Also, if anyone can give me the approximate life-time of the Cinch and Twin labels, I would be very grateful.

Yours faithfully,

Colin Johnson

*While on the subject of Zonophone records, here is a further enquiry from Mr. Stone in New Zealand, who writes on another page in this issue on the matter of dimpled Berliners and G & Ts.*

I would also like to know when my Zonophone record 339 was made. It is announced as "The Wolf Mr. A.Gee the Australian Baritone Zonophone Record". It sounds exactly like Dawson and people unfamiliar with Dawson are able to indicate that his recordings sound like Gee. A Dawson fan also thinks this is an early Dawson. It has a black label, was recorded in London and pressed in Germany.

H.H.G.Stone.

P.S. What is the ISSN 0018 - 1846 for? What does it mean?

It is our International Serials Number, like the International Book Number found in modern books as ISBN. It provides an international standard number for indexing in libraries and catalogues - no use to you and me, maybe, but someone somewhere finds such numbers helpful. - Ed.



## MORE SNIPPETS FROM THE SECRETARY

Life has been fairly hectic for me since my last jottings (in the April issue). Apart from other ramblings, I and two other Society members have been to Germany, although we did not see any talking machines or records to report on. We seemed to turn up in the wrong towns at the wrong times. On our return through Breda in Holland we did happen across a small exhibition of mechanical music in the town centre. Conversation with the owner of the machines in the exhibition led to our being invited to his home to see and hear, among other things, his Weber Unika orchestrion. This machine gave a very good account of itself, and the owner would not consider parting with it.

Another of my ramblings took me to Chichester in Sussex, where I saw Clive Jones' museum of mechanical music. Quite an interesting array, including Polyphons, player pianos, organettes and phonographs. Virtually all the machines in the collection have been fully restored by the museum owners; I felt that some had been over-restored, but that is a personal opinion. One is taken on a brief tour of the instruments with a few of them being demonstrated. The demonstrations are all too brief, with the minimum of historical information divulged. It is appreciated that 98% of the visitors are not interested in the development of mechanical music and visit the museum to satisfy their curiosity or to spend a rainy day. It is also better to give no information than to misinform. However, just an inkling of an historical note would not be out of place. Do not let these comments deter you from visiting the museum, which is housed in an old church close to the northern end of the Chichester bypass. It is open seven days a week during the summer months, and for your wives and daughters there is also a small collection of dolls.

The postman continues to thrust large quantities of mail and cheques through my letterbox and I cannot help thinking that if just 10% of the letters I receive had a suitable article or comment enclosed, the Editor would have more than enough material for the pages of Hillandale.

As my workload never seems to diminish and I cannot give quite so much time to Society affairs, I have decided to relinquish my position as Secretary at the A.G.M. in September. I will continue to distribute the magazine and publications, which leaves a not-too-daunting task for whoever is elected as my successor in September.

## LONDON MEETING

April 1984

This evening we were pleased to welcome Arthur Badrock, a keen researcher into the history of gramophone records. His theme was the development and history of jazz. Arthur's interest in this subject started at the age of twelve, when he heard recordings of the Hot Club de France and Hoagy Carmichael.

Negro music had been developing during some 300 years and they had been absorbing Western music and instruments, but by 1830 the trend was reversing. By 1868 some dances, notably the cakewalk, were becoming popular and by 1890 Scott Joplin was beginning to write the music down. Joplin recorded some items on piano rolls, and here we heard his Magnetic Rag.

Before the first war, many items had entered the repertoire of military bands (Mandy on the Mash, for example) and the songs of longing were developing into the blues. The

first serious attempt at recordings came in 1917 in America with the Original Dixieland Jazz Band on Columbia. Here we heard a recording of King Oliver's Creole Jazz Band. Fletcher Henderson's was the first big band, and by 1924 music was being composed and written down and improvisation was dying out. Louis Armstrong had started in Henderson's Band and here we heard a recording of the St. Louis Blues.

Jelly Roll Morton was the first major jazz composer, and we heard his recording of Deep Creek made in 1928. In Chicago white musicians were trying to copy the style, and among these was Bix Beiderbecke. Coloured and whites were now beginning to record together. Many bands disappeared at the time of the Wall Street crash. Ted Lewis was recording in the early 1930s, and was represented by a morale-boosting number, "Dip Your Brush in the Sunshine". 'Race' records were still being made in 1937-8 and in the early 1940s a new style was developing, exemplified by Charlie Parker's recording of " 'S Wonderful".

London Reporter

*The March 1913 advertisement below is one of four reproduced in this issue to accompany the report of Ruth Edge's talk at the June Meeting.*

*On the front cover, we show one of Herbert Ponting's photographs taken on Scott's Antarctic expedition.*

March, 1913

THE Phono RECORD

25

## The Favorite Record Company

have much pleasure in announcing the SPECIAL ISSUE of

## The Record of the Moment

consisting of an original recitation written expressly for them. and rendered by  
Mr. Ernest Cherry, entitled:

**" 'Mid Snows Antarctic," Captain Scott's Last Message.**

On the reverse side a fine rendering of the late Sir Arthur Sullivan's well-known  
Song, "The Sailor's Grave," sung by Mr. Gwilym Wigley.

**N.B.** THE ENTIRE PROCEEDS OF THE SALE OF THIS UNIQUE RECORD  
WILL BE DEVOTED TO THE CAPTAIN SCOTT MEMORIAL FUND.

Catalogue No. 566. Price 2 6 (10 inch).



**The Favorite Record Company, 45, City Road, London, E.C.**

TELEPHONE: 4386 CITY.



# Reviews

## THE ENGLISH PATHE PERFECT LABEL

EMI have launched a new venture with the publication of a booklet with the above title. Measuring eight inches square, this is a complete listing of the Pathe Perfect records which appeared in England between December 1927 and December 1928, numbering 135 issues in all. Apart from the usual acknowledgements, there is a brief history of the Pathe company, leading up to the issue of the Perfect label, and also a page on the leasing of matrices from other companies. There is also a paragraph and a table on release dates.

The listing is done by catalogue number, and under each one is given a complete range of information, including matrix numbers, artists, titles and composers. Where applicable, full details of other labels which had the same recordings are given, as in the cases where matrices were leased either from or to Pathe Freres. The booklet is finished with an index at the back. The compiler is Arthur Badrock.

This booklet is Number One in a series which EMI intend to publish, but success of the venture depends on you, the readers. Further issues are planned, and I do feel this venture should receive the support it deserves. The booklet is in a glossy self-cover, and may be obtained from the Society's book list, price £2.20 plus 25p. postage.

L.W.

## DECCA COMPLETE SINGLES CATALOGUE 1954-1983 (F' series, 78r.p.m. 10 in. & 45r.p.m. 7 in.)

A complimentary copy of this catalogue has recently come to hand. It has been compiled by Paul Pelletier and published by Record Information Services of Chessington, which was founded ten years ago. The catalogue consists of 124 pages and has a glossy soft white cover printed in orange, making it most attractive to the eye. The price to U.K. purchasers is £4 including postage.

The lowest numbered disc in the F series documented is F 10200, excluding about one dozen transfers of 78s to 45s, and the first 997 entries are the last of the 78s to be issued. Where the alternative 45 was available, this has been indicated. From F 11197 onwards the list is of 45 r.p.m. records, with the few remaining 78s issued as alternatives suitably indicated. The last 78 issue was F 11256, issued in July 1960. The final entry is F 13294 of May 1982, bringing to an end the series begun at F 1500 fifty-three years earlier. There are sixteen other miscellaneous entries, all issued in the 1980s.

Aside from the listing, which is set out in two lines across the pages for each disc giving catalogue number, artists, matrix number, title and date of issue, there are eleven-and-a-half pages of text, giving an accurate history of the Decca company with explanatory items and comments on such subjects as special issues, exports, matrix numbers, unissued discs, demonstration records and test pressings, picture sleeves and the "charts". There are also three pages of reproductions of 24 Decca labels as used on the records listed.

This catalogue is a definitive document and for its price is excellent value for money. What it does not contain, obviously to keep down costs and to minimise a great amount of time and labour (and through sheer lack of space on a page) are the lyricists and composers, or alphabetical list of titles. These last two features one can compile oneself if one wishes, especially if a home computer is available.

This catalogue is the seventeenth production from the Record Information Service, of which there are now twenty-two listed, including its quarterly publication. Previous 78 lists include the following, although 45 r.p.m. records have been the bulk of the subject matter so far: Brunswick (from 1952), Vogue-Vocalion V9000 complete, London-American complete, Vogue-Coral complete and Polygon/Lyragon complete. Embassy (78 and 45) is to be published in the future.

A full information sheet, with terms of purchasing, is available from Paul Pelletier, Record Information Services, [REDACTED]

Frank Andrews.

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LONDON MEETING

JUNE 1984

### ARCTIC EXPLORATION AND THE GRAMOPHONE

The talk given at this month's meeting was the first ever given, as far as we know, to this Society by a lady. We welcomed Ruth Edge, the Chief Archivist at EMI, along with Suzanne Lewis, also of EMI Archives. The subject of the talk was Captain Scott's expedition to the Antarctic in 1910-11, with a background of plans and other polar expeditions. The highlight of the talk was to be a recital of as many records as could be traced which were actually taken on that fateful expedition and played on the gramophone used by Scott and his crew. Most of us have seen pictures of this machine in books, but here was the actual gramophone in full working order, looking very little the worse for wear and its age.

Polar exploration was by no means a new thing, attempts having been chronicled as far back as 1576, but our talk was confined to the Twentieth Century. There were attempts at the North Pole by Dr. Frederick Cook and Commander Peary, while Ernest Shackleton attempted the South Pole. Here we heard the record made by Cook (this one sold only 26 copies in the first two years and quickly disappeared) and the one by Peary (which remained available until 1942). Later we also heard Sir Ernest Shackleton's record "Dash for the South Pole".

Robert Faclon Scott was not a robust child, but after joining a training ship at the age of 13 he showed great promise, and at 21 he started keeping a detailed diary. In 1899, while serving aboard a torpedo ship, he learnt of plans to mount an Antarctic expedition, and applied for permission to command it. This application proved successful.

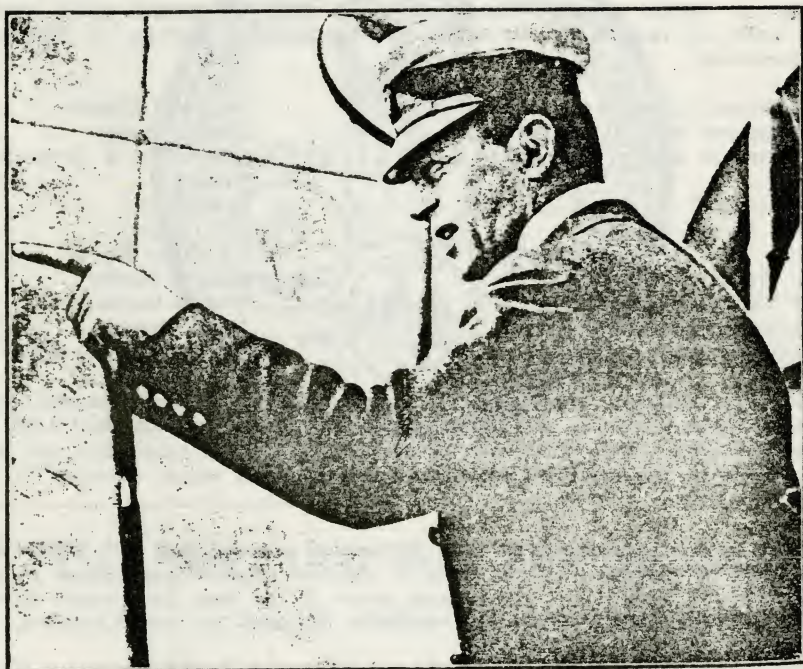
The expedition set sail in 1901, and included in the crew Ernest Shackleton. The ship used was the "Discovery", specially commissioned at Dundee, and Scott had visited Norway to discover the best methods of sledging, and what stores might be needed. The expedition lasted three years, but in spite of the many scientific discoveries which were made, Scott received little recognition for his efforts: in fact the Government of the day said nothing. However, the press championed his cause, and he became a celebrity,



# **VICTORY RECORDS.**



In Memory of  
Capt. Scott  
and his  
Heroic Comrades.



**" 'TIS A STORY THAT SHALL LIVE FOR EVER."**

SUNG BY **ROBERT CARR.**

DO NOT FORGET this was **FIRST OUT** on VICTORY RECORDS.

**BLUM & CO., LTD., 220, Old Street, London, E.C.**

Telegrams: Kalliope, London.

Telephones: 5048 and 5049 Wall.

touring the country giving lectures.

By 1907 Scott had decided on another expedition, but so had Shackleton, who embarked on a two-year expedition and received a hero's welcome on his return, being feted at Buckingham Palace and knighted. Shackleton had taken a gramophone and records with him on his voyage.

In 1909 Scott announced his plans but had difficulty raising funds. He eventually set sail in June 1910 in the "Terra Nova" complete with all supplies, including two His Master's Voice gramophones and a player piano. The first actual reference to the gramophone in Scott's diary was on January the 19th 1911, when he remarked on the "splendid selection of records".

Unfortunately, in spite of extensive efforts on the part of Ruth and others, not many details of the actual records taken on the expedition have come to light, but a New Zealand man who looks after Scott's hut was able to come up with ten titles, although he says there are no records in the hut. The rest of the evening was taken up with listening to copies of the records played on the gramophone which went to the South Pole. Lists of records usually make dull reading, but perhaps in this instance it will prove interesting.

"Love is Meant to Make us Glad"	Margaret Cooper	3820
"The Prehistoric Man"	George Robey	2-2673
"Night Hymn at Sea"	Clara Butt & Kennerley	
	Rumford	04046
"Abide with me"	Clara Butt	03179
"The Golf Scene"	G.P.Huntley	B402
"One Fine Day" (Madam Butterfly)	Geraldine Farrar	2-053010
"We All Walked into the Shop"	Stanley Kirkby	3-2283
"I Want Yer ma Honey"	Yvette Guilbert	3736
"A Sergeant of the Line"	Harry Dearth	02230
"The Dollar Princess", two-step	Black Diamonds Band	2-462

In conclusion, mention was made of several "dramatic" style records made soon after the fateful expedition and one was played, " 'Tis a Story that shall Live Forever", sung by Stanley Kirkby. The film "Scott of the Antarctic" was mentioned, and a recording of Vaughan Williams' "Sinfonia Antarctica", developed from music featured in the film, was played.

Altogether, this was a delightful and memorable evening, and one which must have taken many hours to prepare. It was a joy to see the original gramophone in such good working order and to imagine the relief from some of the long dark winter days it must brought to those explorers. Ruth was cordially thanked by the Chairman, and was presented with a bouquet by the President.

London Reporter

For anyone not familiar with the photographs of the Scott gramophone, it may perhaps be worth mentioning that it is an oak Senior Monarch with an oak horn. It would have been one of the last of the original Senior Monarchs, the style with an embossed moulding round the base, which had been replaced with a less 'gingerbready' design by the end of 1910. The Ponting photographs show a Husky in suitable pose.



# Diploma Records

*In memory of Capt. Scott and his Heroic Comrades.*



Exact Reproduction of Record.

**"'Tis a story that shall live for ever."**

Sung by ROBERT CARR (with Orchestra).

*A record that should be in everyone's repertoire.*

## BLUM & CO., LTD.,

220, OLD STREET  
LONDON, E.C.

Telephone: 547 & 548, W.B.

# POINTS & QUERIES

Can you see my mother's face as half a dozen sea scouts delivered an HMV 163 to our house on a handcart? I was 14 and already regarded as a family nuisance by making my room into a junk store. At 15 I was selling scrap gold and silver, re-framing prints and hawking them round to reproduction furniture shops and making a considerable amount of pocket money.

Many things were sold off to make extra cash, but gramophones and records stayed. Before the arrival of the 163 I already had a fine table model. My enthusiasm for recording equipment was not a precocious antiquarianism but the main source of my musical education. At 15 I hadn't l.p. or radiogram buying power, and so I randomly listened to Elgar conducting Elgar, Florence Austral singing Weber, de Greef playing Chopin, Billy Bennett doing THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS and Gracie Fields OUR AVENUE and so on. It all seemed very quirky to my friends in 1964!

Soon after the arrival of the 163 I took it apart. I wasn't and still am not a natural engineer. I ruined it, and eventually painted cabinet, after which I sold it to my brother. Thankfully, the lovely table model is still just as lovely, and has been joined by a selected number of other machines; an E.M.G., an early Monarch, a Paillard Echophone and a smart 163.

Between my mid-teenage and now my record collection has been rationalised and cared for. It is small and selective. I no longer scatter records across my bedroom floor and leave them there for weeks so that they inevitably get damaged. It happened to poor Billy Bennett - a loss from which I've never recovered. Overcrowding of course is the problem now, but I continue to buy acoustic recordings to enhance my collection which covers the entire musical repertoire, serious and popular.

Now I'm involved in a busy career where time for my amateur passion is limited, and I feel that the scope of my knowledge is miniscule in comparison with the giants, Frank Andrews, Len Watts, George Frow et al. Like Mr. Carlisle (H & D 138), I'm a loyal and ever thankful member of the C.L.P.G.S., and an avid reader of the journal, and agree that a novices' page where apparently naive questions can be put and fielded by member-experts would be a valuable addition to the magazine.

It may be that we shall need to be referred to a back number, and what joy to be able to send for the appropriate copy and glean in detail what one would like to know. It may be that a piece of advice about this book or that archive could be offered.

So, to kick off the questions, hoping for answers or advice about further reading, here goes:

For a beginner, can members advise about simple dating techniques (a) for machines and (b) for records?

Advice about de-coding matrices on the more common records.

Memories concerning the working practices and conditions on the factory floor of the Gramophone Co., Columbia and Edison Bell, pre-1920.



# TWO GREAT ZONO SPECIALS!



(descriptive of the Capt. Scott disaster)

**No. 1050**

*By Stanley Kirkby*

Ten-inch Record 2/6

**“’Tis a story  
that shall live  
for ever”**

and

**“Be British”** (a realistic account of the wreck of the “Titanic”).

**FIRST AND BEST — ZONOPHONES!**

**No. 1042**

26 Ten-inch Record 2/6



**“Ragtime Goblin  
Man”**

Sung by Harry Fay and Stanley Kirkby, and

**“I do love my wife”**

Sung by Harry Fay

# TWO GREAT ZONO SPECIALS!

The history of and reasoning behind developments in label printing by the major companies.

Since the sea scouts turned up with the 163 my attitude to records, recording and the machinery has changed. I now feel more like the guardian of a world locked into existence by a mechanical process which became obsolete in 1925-6, but I'm still haunted by the ghost of my mother who threatened, weekly, to chuck every record out of the window into the garden if I went to any more jumble sales.

David Sulkin.

*Of course, there is nothing new in the exhorting of members to send in questions, although I am reluctant to put them under a heading which suggests that they are suitable only for novices. A splendid example happens to be to hand, a letter asking about something possibly so simple that those who know the answer would never have thought of mentioning it. Nonetheless, the ignorant Editor, after thirty years of on-and-off collecting, does not know the cause of the dimples referred to. Now read on....*

Dear Sir/Madam,(sic)

Hamilton East, New Zealand

Could you please ask your members if any can explain the mysterious depressions which appear in the earliest G & Ts and a few Berliners. The record material feels lighter and gives a slightly different sound when tapped. When did these depressions begin? When did they stop? And why were they there anyway?

In the list which follows, the Caruso (Adriana Lecouvreur) is the only one of my red G & Ts of this artist with such depressions. The Russian records also have well-formed conventional records before some listed: e.g. 22141 500<sup>C</sup>, obviously issued before either 22712 or 22313.

Vienna:

72634	403B F-22	Pacal	Berliner
42702	2340 B F-2 <sup>2</sup>	Naval	Black G & T
2-42507	850x F-2 <sup>2</sup>	Naval	"
42816	849x F-2 <sup>2</sup>	Naval	"
44066	851x N-2	Naval	"

London:

7956	2701-w <sup>2</sup> <sub>8</sub>	Kubelik	Red G & T
2-2711	2024-w	Scotti	"

Milan:

52419	2890 (or 2870)	Caruso	"
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St Petersburg:

22712 II	1787B-F Q22	Davidov	Berliner
22313x	511 <sup>e</sup> -no-2 <sup>2</sup>	Labinski	Black G & T

Berlin:

42692 II	2229	Bertram	"
40298	1443x <sup>8</sup> -ro	Band	"

H.H.G.Stone.



## REGIONAL ROUNDUP

Mike Field

And now, as they say, for something completely different. Instead of reporting on the Regional activities in this country, let's take a brief look at the phonographic scene in America. In the land of opportunity what opportunities are there for the native phonophile, or for that matter, the itinerant European?

Well, first there are the museums. Americans seem to love museums - any size, any subject, anywhere. For the phonographic enthusiast, there are fabulous museums in West Orange, Deerborn, Fort Myers, Washington and no doubt many others of importance. Top of my list is the Edison National Historic Site at West Orange near Newark, where you can almost feel the atmosphere. Machines, equipment and associated paraphernalia abound and if you are a bona fide researcher you can even peep behind the scenes (with prior notice). Down in the archives there are documents, notebooks and other material which make fascinating reading and, if that is not enough, stored equipment including phonographs, cinematic equipment horns and early examples of the Edison genius abound.

Then there is the Smithsonian National Museum of American History in Washington, where one of its themes features the development of the disc and cylinder phonograph. While some of the exhibits could be treated with reverence - how about a Bell Tainter circa 1887? - I am always slightly disappointed that only a small part of its impressive collection is on display. However, the museum, covering as it does so many facets of American inventiveness, can give hours of pleasure and perhaps it is a little unfair to complain that (say) clocks, which have a more universal appeal, are given more prominence than phonographs. Apparently only about 1% of the inventory is on display, so there must be some pretty impressive machinery and material somewhere.

The smaller private museums (private in the sense of being owned by an individual) are perhaps the most interesting of all. I've never yet found one where the owner was not willing, even eager, to show his collection to an interested caller. And you find them in the most unexpected places. In Opryland, the mecca of country music in Nashville, Tennessee, there is a small museum owned by Roy Acuff, one of the stars of the Grand Ole Opry. Naturally enough the displays concentrate more on the history of country music, but liberally scattered among the exhibits are many cylinder and disc machines - some of impressive rarity.

Finally, there is the phonograph collector's home. Chances are that if you can contact one, you will be invited to see the collection which will probably concentrate on American made machines. Very often it will occupy at least one room, and usually the best one. In one collector's home in Texas, virtually the whole house is turned over to displays of machines (each room with its own theme) leaving just enough room for the curator's staff, ie the family, to eat and sleep.

Some very impressive phono fairs are held. On 9 and 10 June this year a giant Phono fair was held at the "Seven Acres" Museum in Union Illinois some 30 miles west of Chicago. Billed as the largest event ever held in the United States, it must have been some affair. The annual convention of members of the Association for Recorded Sound Collections was held in Bowling Green, Ohio, earlier in the year, where many lectures and presentations of interest to phonograph collectors were given.

Then there are flea markets and flea markets and yet more flea markets! No matter where you are there is likely to be a flea market nearby; nearby that is by American standard; say within 50 miles. Every medium sized town seems to have a proliferation of antique shops and mini flea markets. Antique does not have the same literal meaning in the US. While there are many genuine high quality shops selling furniture, paintings and artifacts which meet the European definition of an antique, there are also many which may offer anything "old", ie more than 5-10 years, as an "antique". Not that it's a matter of complaint - you just need to know the rules and remember they resemble the fast vanishing British junk shop.

The weekend flea markets are magnificent! Acres, yes acres, of stalls are set up in the open air or any available collection of buildings and the goods on offer range from cheap costume jewelry to rusty, often broken tools or from second hand clothes to phonographs. Prices are often incredible. £350 was asked for a very average GEM with a small reproduction horn in Nashville, but a very respectable Fireside with an original horn and cylinders was offered for £200 with scope for negotiation. On the other hand, genuine large Edison horns can be found for £35 in Canton, Texas, and cylinders might cost you less than £1. And of course the beauty of a flea market, if one can be beautiful, is that none of the exhibitors has any inhibitions about offering the most outrageous junk in appalling condition - so you could pick up a restorable machine for a bargain price.

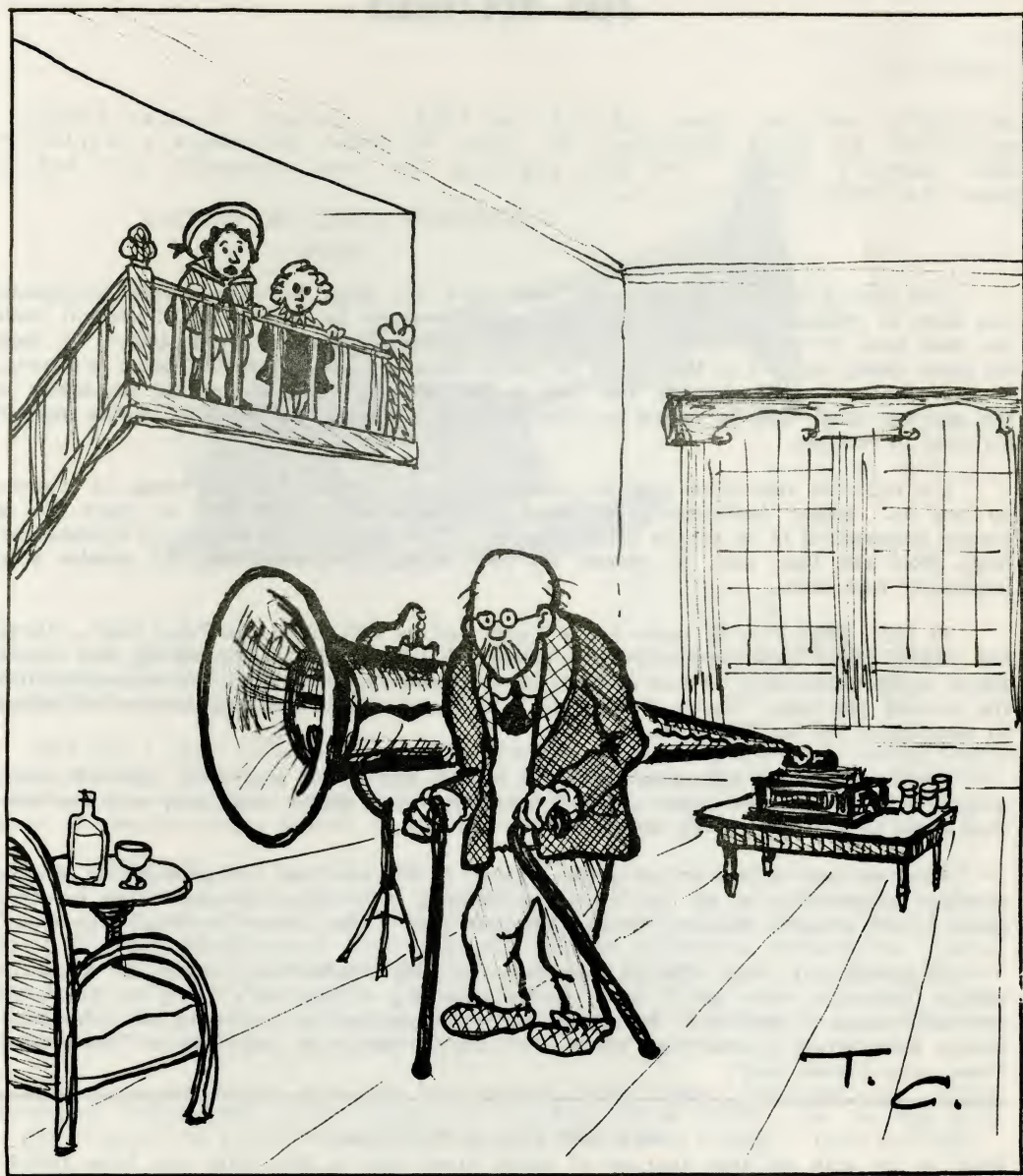
And should you need to carry out a little restoration, there are many advertisers offering spare parts for motors, reproducers and cabinets. Some dealers will send you a regular catalogue of machines and associated phonographic material for sale while others advertise in specialist magazines such as the Antique Phonograph Monthly.

So, considering the museums, collection, phonofairs, flea markets and advertisers, there is plenty of opportunity for the phonograph collector to further his hobby in America. To the occasional impressionable visitor like me, the scope seems tremendous but this superficial account probably omits much that could be mentioned. If so, perhaps the knowledgeable will repair the omission.

#### DID BERLIOZ MEET DEBUSSY?

Bob Leach, Editor of our contemporary, The Music Box (magazine of the Musical Box Society of Great Britain) writes books under his full name, Robert Clarson-Leach, to avoid confusion with his son, who is in a similar line of business and writes as Robert Leach. Bob (that is, R.C.-L) has recently published a book on Berlioz ('Berlioz', published by Midas Books, 44 Holden Park Road, Tunbridge Wells, Kent TN4 0ER, £7.50 or \$16.95 from Hippocrene Books Inc., 171 Madison Avenue, New York NY 10016 U.S.A.). His next work is to be on Debussy, and in researching the two, Bob has discovered that, in the summer of 1867, Berlioz (then 64) and Debussy (only 5 years old) lived a few doors apart from each other in Paris. It seems very probable that they met. Further information on these and other publications is available from Robert Clarson-Leach at





You see ? He never quite makes it back to his seat before the record finishes.

# John McCormack

*Amazingly, no one, least of all the Editor, thought to draw readers' attention to the centenary in June of John McCormack's birth in that month's issue. We are grateful to John Cavanagh for making good the omission here.....*

Just over a century ago, on June 14th 1884, the great Irish tenor John McCormack was born in Athlone. He was educated in Dublin where he sang in the Cathedral choir. He then went to Milan where he studied under Vincenzo Sabatini from 1905. He made his stage debut, as hero in Mascagni's "L'Amico Fritz", at the Teatro Chiabrera in Savona. A year later, in 1907, London saw him in several operatic roles but as his acting on the operatic stage was no match for the purity of his voice, he began to devote more of his time to recitals.

His recorded repertoire was, fortunately for us, immense and the range of material no less so. Indeed McCormack encompassed such a wide range that it could not be clearly documented in an article of this nature. From Handel and Mozart to Rachmaninov, Hugo Wolf and Bax, also, of course, his own incomparable renderings of popular songs (especially Irish ones).

In 1924, Pope Pius XI made him a Count and an official of the Papal court. During the 1930s, Count John appeared in a couple of films while still recording and making public appearances on a regular basis. He continued recording after his retirement from the concert platform. During World War II he made a few "live" appearances and toured to raise funds for the Red Cross.

On the 16th. of September 1945, in Dublin, this great man died. He left behind a splendid legacy of recordings, of which many have been almost constantly available since their issue over half a century ago.

Now we can reflect on his great artistry in his work for the gramophone, whether recorded acoustically or by the electrical process. His voice seemed to be especially suited to the acoustic medium, whether the song was "Il Meo Tesoro" or "Molly Brannigan".

Incidentally, I would like to recommend a lesser-known McCormack disc to anyone who is unfamiliar with it. I refer to his recording of Bantock's "Song to the Seals", originally issued on HMV DA 1851. This record is particularly interesting as it features a spoken introduction by the man whom Sir Compton McKenzie described as "The greatest Tenor since Caruso died".

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## NEW USE FOR OLD SPRINGS

What to do with all that footage of spring steel that is left after you have fitted a new spring in your gramophone? One answer is to be found in Newnes' 'Home Mechanic' published about 1930: "Make a wide hem on one edge of a piece of calico large enough to make an apron from. Thread the spring through the hem. This results in a neat apron which is not only secure and comfortable, but can be slipped on or off in an instant."



## A VICTOR FIND

by Ray Phillips

### VICTOR DE LUXE MONARCH

\$60.00



No one in his right mind would go to Reno, Nevada to find early phonographs or phonograph collectors, yet there are two very personable and active collectors there, Dr. "Bud" West and Charlie Stewart.

Bud has a large collection, including some very interesting coin-ops. Charlie has a large and varied collection, with Zon-O-Phones as a speciality. By the way, he has available the best reproduction Edison decals that I have ever seen. They are extremely thin, and an alternative variety consists of separate letters, thus avoiding the "decal" effect.

It's one of Charlie's machines that I want to tell you about, as I have never seen or known of another in fifty years of collecting. The Victor de luxe Monarch is shown in an engraving on the cover of a little catalogue of circa 1901, labelled "Victor Disc Talking Machine Manufactured Exclusively by Eldridge R. Johnson, Philadelphia, U.S.A." The engraving shows it without its extension arm and standard horn, but with a 30-inch horn and nickel-plated floor stand. In the catalogue the 30-inch horn was \$3.00 extra, and an adjustable stand could be had for \$4.00. A 42-inch brass horn was available for \$10.00. Unfortunately the cover is printed in black on dark green and will not copy.

The catalogue begins with the hand-cranked \$3.00 Victor, progresses to the Victor Monarch at \$40.00, then to the Victor de luxe Monarch at \$60.00. On the last page but one is shown the Victor Monarch with Antique Hand-Carved Cabinet. Price \$150.00.

Illustrations for each of these last two show a pre-tone-arm machine with a single piece spun brass horn and a "Standard Sound Box" of the enclosed diaphragm Berliner type.

Now to get to Charlie's machine. First some statistics: it has a 10-inch turntable, single spring motor and an Eldridge Johnson Concert soundbox. (The catalogue shows a Concert soundbox available for \$5.00). The turntable has a 'hold-down' screw, and it and other exposed metal parts are nickel plated. Charlie's machine has a black conical horn with a polished brass bell and leather elbow. The box is 15 3/8 inches square; to the top of the turntable, 9 1/4 inches. The box is as highly carved as the engraving shows, and is of oak, stained black. The black colour is a shock, as the catalogue engravings are line drawings that give you no idea that the box is other than the normal stained oak. Neither does the catalogue mention it. The engravings show a plain wooden travelling arm, but Charlie's is not only an inch longer than a standard Monarch arm, but is slightly thicker and has a branch-and-leaf pattern carved along it on both sides. It is stained black also. Good evidence that the colour is original is that the box and the wooden arm match in colour, but came from different sources an entire continent apart!

It would be nice if I could say that Charlie had the matching record cabinet also, but sadly, I cannot. Charlie got the machine, or rather the beginnings of it, in 1980. A friend of his in Northern California told him of the owner, the proprietor of a used furniture shop in San Francisco. It had been brought into the shop and sold as used furniture. What the proprietor really wanted was a nice Victor VI that he could play, and Charlie hastened to oblige him!



**VICTOR MONARCH**  
With Antique Hand-Carved Cabinet.  
**PRICE, \$150.00.**

When obtained the machine was 'complete' but had many reproduction parts. The only original parts were the box, motor and turntable. It had a Zon-O-Phone back bracket and the hold-down screw, crank etc. were all reproductions. As this machine, except for the box and the wooden arm, was a standard Monarch, Charlie was able to accumulate original replacements. He chose a black horn with brass bell and a Concert soundbox, as these were clearly shown on a De Luxe Monarch in a 1901 magazine advertisement. (unfortunately Charlie's photocopy is not clear enough to reproduce here.)

The wooden arm was an entirely different matter. Only a black one from another De Luxe would do, of course. Can you imagine the odds against ever finding one, much less obtaining it? Fortunately about this time Allen Koenigsberg wrote about the machine in his 'Antique Phonograph Monthly'. This stimulated a collector in Connecticut to write to Charlie. He had an Eldridge Johnson 'M' with black wooden arm that had a design of a branch with leaves carved on each side of it. This pattern was evident in the 1901 magazine ad! The arm was too long for the 'M', but had come with it. Charlie traded a nice Zon-O-Phone for the 'M'. Now, thanks to a great deal of perseverance, thoughtful fellow-collectors and some world-class luck, Charlie is the justifiably proud owner of a beautiful example of an extremely rare and handsome machine.





Ruth Lambert has sent us these pictures of two series of German needle tins, one showing views of towns, the other various winged creatures. Can anyone identify the makers or dates of these?



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